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KNOWLEDGE
IS
POWER

An exhibition arranged by
Richard Dennis
John Jesse

Chr. Dresser

Christopher Dresser
1834-1904

Pottery
Glass
Metalwork

3 October to 27 October 1972

The Fine Art Society Ltd
148 New Bond Street
London W1
01-629 5116

Illustrated on cover
Knowledge is Power
from Dresser's *The Art of Decorative Design*, 1862
(pl. XXIV)
((Francis Bacon (1561-1626)
Religious Meditations Of Heresies
'Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est'
'(Knowledge is itself power)'))

Illustrated left
Dresser in his conservatory at Elm Bank,
Barnes. About 1900.
This photograph was presented to Frederick
Burrows when he left Dresser's studio in *c.* 1901.
It is the only known photograph of Dresser.

Richard Dennis
144 Kensington Church Street
London W8
01-727 2061

John Jesse
164 Kensington Church Street
London W8
01-229 1978

Acknowledgement

During his lifetime the name of Dr Christopher Dresser was a household word. His extraordinary energy and versatility had covered most aspects of decorative design, including pottery, glass, metalwork, textiles, wallpapers and furniture. Until recently his name was almost forgotten and examples of his work were hard to find.

We felt that much of his design was so advanced for his time that it would be interesting to collect his work and stage a representative exhibition. Achieving this turned out to be more difficult than we had imagined. Over the years we have gradually formed a collection of glass, ceramics and metalwork, but have been unable to find furniture, textiles or wallpaper in sufficient quantity to exhibit.

We hope that this exhibition will stimulate interest and give Dr Dresser the wider recognition he deserves.

We would particularly like to thank the Fine Art Society for making their premises available to us, and Stuart Durant for his expertise and enthusiasm. Our gratitude goes to Patricia Butler, Curator of Ipswich Museum, and C. B. Maycock Esq. of Messrs Chubb for their assistance to Stuart. We thank Mrs Shirley Bury, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for her help, Gordon House the catalogue designer, and Cuming Wright-Watson the photographers; and also James Dixon & Sons Ltd. for allowing us to reproduce the photographs of Dresser's designs. We are especially grateful to the late Charles Handley-Read for his unfailing support and encouragement. Finally we would like to thank the following for lending pieces from their collections:

Mrs Barbara Atterbury 130; Ian Bennett Esq. 127, 137; Albert Gallichan Esq. 85; Malcolm Haslam Esq. 14, 25, 92; Andrew McIntosh Patrick Esq. 89; J. S. M. Scott Esq. 125, 142; T. M. Tyrer Esq. 96; The Victoria and Albert Museum 108; Private collection 61; Private collection 138, 140, 141.

Richard Dennis, John Jesse

Christopher Dresser, 1834-1904

Christopher Dresser delighted in his own times. His enthusiasm for scientific progress and the machine-age contrasts with the pessimism of Ruskin and Morris. He expressed his optimism in his *Popular Manual of Botany*, 1860.

'... The night of science is fast passing away; the dawn of a glorious day – time has long since commenced, and we live in the early morning of this long-hoped for day ...'

The new knowledge was to be infused into his design. Design should exemplify the quality he called 'mind'. In the *Planet* in *'On Decorative Art'* published in January 1862 Dresser put forward a view that he often re-stated ... 'the greater the manifestation of mind in a work of art ... the more pleasure we derive from it ...'

Dresser believed, (like D'Alambert the 18th century mathematical philosopher), that existing scientific laws were destined to become outmoded by newer and simpler laws which would have wider applications. The association of simplicity with progress led him to believe that design should be simple.

The distinctiveness of Dresser's design of objects often springs from his ability to provide solutions to problems without resorting to the 19th century practice of basing design on historical precedent. In pattern and ornamental design Dresser remained an eclectic, a brilliant one throughout his career.

The two principal reasons for Dresser's rejection of historicism were his recognition of the importance of function (or 'fitness for purpose') and his belief, inspired by the teachings of Owen Jones, that design should be appropriate to the age in which it was created. Pugin, Redgrave and Jones had recognised the importance of functional design. Only Dresser was able to detach himself from the umbilical cord of historic style.

Dresser began his professional career as a botanist and this period was of great importance in his development; the imprint of his years as a botanist can be seen in all his design. Plant structures were transformed into pottery, glass and metal, not naturalistically but conventionalised. He held several professorships in both scientific and 'art botany', presented a number of papers before the leading learned societies and produced three excellently illustrated manuals for students of botany. He retained his interest in botany until his death and maintained a fine garden. The only photograph of Dresser that seems to survive shows him seated, in his late sixties, in a well stocked and typically Victorian conservatory.

Dresser's botanical text books were concerned almost exclusively with the structure of the plant (as opposed to its chemistry or micro-structure). His text books were stylishly presented with numerous clear illustrations and ingenious diagrams, and marked a new high level in educational publishing. One would have expected elegant presentation from a botanist who had been trained mainly at the Schools of Design. It is surprising that Dresser's botany itself should not lack interest to the historian of botany.

Agnes Arber in her *Natural Philosophy of Plant Form* (Cambridge, 1950) credited Dresser with an original

hypothesis regarding the nature of the leaf. For Dresser the leaf was a 'modified branch' or 'a branch with a retrograde development'. Such thinking may now strike us as outside the mainstream of scientific thought, but in the 1840s and 1850s controversy regarding the true nature and relationships of organs was taken very seriously. For the botanists of Dresser's youth the plant was held to consist of two fundamental organs, the stem and the leaf. Goethe had held that the leaf represented the essence of the plant, Dresser, on the other hand, held that the fundamental organ of the plant was the stem.

Dresser's botanical speculations came just before Darwinism was to sweep all ideas which savoured of 'natur-philosophie' before it. The very title of his second book on botany *Unity in Variety . . . an attempt at developing that oneness which is discoverable in the habits, mode of growth and principles of all plants*, suggests the nature of his botany. He attempted an ordered and concise picture of the plant world, the sort of picture that botanists had tried to provide before the real advance of modern scientific botany had begun in Germany in the late 1830s.

A notable feature of Dresser's botany was his interest in trying to reduce the plant to an orderly geometrical form, the geometry of the plant was to become his speciality. The drawing of plants in an 'ideal' form, ignoring the deformations and irregularities that exist in reality was developed in Germany. In the first decade of the 19th century Phillip Otto Runge, (a Romantic painter who made particular use of imposing symmetry on his compositions to achieve an other-worldly or spiritual quality), made drawings of plants according to ideal regular plans. By 1831 Alexander Braun had established mathematical laws governing the disposition of leaves around the stem. Dresser later became familiar with this work in the 1850s. (The reducing of plants to regular plans seems to epitomise the confidence of the mid-19th century, however misplaced, in having at last begun to learn the real workings of nature).

While the mathematics of growth were a particularly German preoccupation, the interest in the symmetry of plants, reflected in both Dresser's botany and his design, had originated in France with Xavier Bichat and Corréa da Serra and later A. P. De Candolle (whose work so impressed Goethe). In 1852 John Lindley (1799-1865), who in the early 1830s had introduced Goethe's botanical revelations to the English public, gave three lectures to the students of the Schools of Design called *The Symmetry of Vegetation*. Dresser, either as a student or a young teacher, would have attended Lindley's lectures. Not only were Dresser's views on the symmetry of plants derived from Lindley but so were many of his other botanical ideas. His views on the nature of the leaf are essentially a continuation of the Goethe-Lindley tradition.

In the 1850s, while still in his early twenties Dresser drew plans, elevations and sections of plants. His ability at this was evidently considered exceptional and Owen Jones asked him to contribute a whole plate of his geometrical plant drawings to the monumental *Grammar of Ornament* (1856). The value of drawing plants in this way is obvious to the designer of patterns, but in Dresser's case it also marked a real commitment to the belief that the duty of the artist was to idealise rather than copy nature.

Writing in 1862 in his *Development of Ornamental Art* . . . (a critical guide to the International Exhibition) Dresser set out his views on the order inherent in plants : '. . . In plants we have the manifestation of order in the protrusion of every member. A leaf does not grow casually, or a blossom in an accidental position. Yet while the development of the plant is governed by laws of the most severe character, the harshness of the manifestation of the rigid principle upon which the parts are protruded . . . is frequently . . . disguised by the membraneous and elastic character of the foliage, and the pliability of the parts . . . in all instances the unfolding of the plant manifests the working by law'. Dresser's attitude to the plant is echoed in his design which was always constructed on a firm geometrical base.

By 1862, while still lecturing on botany, Dresser had begun to devote more and more time to design and claimed to have designed a number of the exhibits at the International Exhibition of 1862. Six years later he had virtually abandoned botany as a profession. The most likely reason for the dramatic change was that as one of the very first free-lance designers for industry his ambitions, in a profession that was only just being established, would stand greater chance of fulfilment than in botany. There were many excellent botanists but few competitors in design.

Dresser's sketchbook of the mid-1860s, (an 'ideas book' would be a more apt description), discovered by Patricia Butler, Curator of the Ipswich Museum, reveals that at even this date his ideas on design were very firmly established. There are designs that appear in his 'Studies in Design' of 1874-76 and designs for metal work which were to appear later still, work that was remarkably advanced in the 1870s and 1880s was in fact originated in the 1860s.

Writing in *Development of Ornamental Art* in 1862 Dresser stressed : '. . . Utility must precede beauty' In the *Technical Educator* of 1870-73 he was to say : '. . . the designer must be a utilitarian, but he must be an artist also'. He studied the processes of manufacture and the workings of nature, the economy that he saw running through nature he embodied in his design. The *Studio* article of 1899 on Dresser spoke of his : 'Spencerian' philosophy.

Another aspect of Dresser's realistic approach to design was his acceptance of the rational eclecticism that Owen Jones had propounded. Writing in the *Journal of Design* for June 1851 Jones had stated his position :
'. . . Each civilization in the ascendant goes to nature for its principles, and enriches its own invention with the choicest conceptions of antecedent ages ; . . . declining civilizations substitute only a series of decrepit, disordered and fruitless caprices'.
'We possess the inestimable advantage of living in an age when nothing of the past remains a secret . . . how little have we shown ourselves worthy of this great privilege ! The ease with which our knowledge might be obtained has made us indifferent to its acquirement, or led us to substitute an indolent imitation for an intelligent and imaginative eclecticism'.

Dresser, more than any other Victorian designer, and indeed Jones himself, responded to the call for an : 'intelligent and imaginative eclecticism'. In the *Chromolithograph* in 1868 he wrote : '... Variety has at no period been so much sought as at the present ... Unlike past periods the present has no national architecture. We erect one building in the Gothic style, another in imitation of the classic Parthenon, and the third in form as an Egyptian temple ...' Style was always simply a matter of surface for Dresser, the *Studio* in 1899 talked of his 'marvellous knowledge of past styles'. As with plants he sought to discover the essence of things. In his three-dimensional design he rejected stylistic solutions to produce work that is timeless within the period of the machine-age.

Throughout his career Dresser acknowledged his debt to Owen Jones and the idea of his *Principles of Art* obviously derives from Jones' 'Propositions' which were published in the *Grammar of Ornament* and instilled into several generations of art students. Jones gave designers rules of good taste, based on common-sense, the study of nature and lessons learned from past styles. Dresser's *Principles* on the other hand are a kind of manifesto where he attempted to establish the superiority of non naturalistic art over representational art : 'ideal' and 'imitative' were his terms.

In an evening at the South Kensington Museum in 1859 Ruskin spoke on the *Deteriorative Power of Conventional Art over Nations* a diatribe against conventionalism (the term for the kind of ornament Dresser championed) which he associated with degenerate morality, singling out the art of India for special opprobrium. (In 1859 England was still reeling from the shocks inflicted on her pride by the Indian Mutiny.) But it was exactly the conventionalism of Oriental art that Dresser admired, a taste he acquired from Owen Jones. While Jones was content to produce scholarly variations of Oriental pattern, Dresser created a new language of ornament into which were infused not only his knowledge of many national and past styles, but his understanding of the forms of plants and his remarkable geometrical ability.

Dresser tried to raise the status of ornament to a level higher than that of painting. In 1871 he claimed before an audience at the Royal Society of Arts : 'true ornamentation is of purely mental origin, and consists of symbolised imagination only ... ornamentation is not only fine art, but ... it is high art ... even a higher art than that practised by the pictorial artist, as it is wholly of mental origin'. This view, voiced when it was, was as daring as it was controversial.

Dresser's interest in Japanese design began with the International Exhibition of 1862 where Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809-1897), the first British Consul in Japan, displayed a collection of Japanese manufactures. Dresser made drawings of a number of Alcock's exhibits and succeeded in buying a number of others which became the basis of his fine collection of Japanese work. In 1877, at the height of the enthusiasm for Japan, Dresser travelled to Yokohama and began a detailed survey of Japanese arts and industries, the first by a European designer. The account of the visit to Japan was published in 1882 and is highly readable and well illustrated with delightful woodcuts. Dresser wrote of the Japanese as : 'the only perfect metal workers which the world has yet produced, for they are the only people who do not think of the material, and regard the effect produced as of far greater moment than the material employed'. Elements of Japanese design often appear in Dresser's work but he was no slavish imitator.

In 1880 Dresser was appointed : 'Art Manager' of the Art Furnishers' Alliance founded to : 'carry on the business of manufacturing, buying and selling high-class goods of artistic design'. The Alliance was financed by a number of leading manufacturers. Dresser saw it as a platform from which he would influence middle-class taste in the way that Morris had done. In 1899 the *Studio* recalled his association with the Art Furnishers' Alliance : '... In the eighties he was the originator of the so-called Art Furniture Alliance, which opened in New Bond Street for the sale of metalwork, pottery, glass, fabrics, and other things, the majority being designed by Mr. Dresser himself, or executed under his supervision. Attendants robed in many aesthetic costumes of the period, in demure art colours, added a certain air to the place, which set it absolutely apart from a shop. So far as memory may be trusted the average work there was very good, and that the enterprise did not continue is perhaps partly owing to the fact that it was before its time. For it was alone in its mission in addressing a popular audience. It is true that Morris & Co. were known to few ... but no window in a popular thoroughfare was supporting the movement destined to assume such large proportions later ...'

Frederick Burrows, who entered Dresser's studio as an articled pupil in the late 1890s, remembered that the studio was mainly engaged in textile design. Dresser employed about 10 assistants and pupils and his daughters helped with the running of the office. Dresser was an authoritarian but well-liked figure. His technical knowledge was a legend among his assistants, and he would firmly smudge drawings that fell below his standard. Dresser used to repeat a slogan to his assistants : 'maximum effect with minimum means'. There was always an atmosphere of being hard-pressed for money.

Unlike Morris, Dresser left no disciples. He had trained many excellent commercial designers, flexible and able to survive in a competitive world, but men who were unable to pass on his genius.

In the 1860s and 1870s Dresser had been the leading popular writer on design. Referring to his *Principles of Decorative Design* (1873) the *Studio* in 1899, by then buzzing with news of the arts and crafts, was to say : '... one finds scarce a single theory of good taste ... or a single piece of advice ... but it is as sound and as pertinent today as then ... one might quote page after page and find not a line ... that would not be endorsed by the members of the Arts and Crafts Association today'.

In his lifetime Dresser suffered no lack of recognition and it becomes increasingly strange to us that the leading Victorian industrial designer should have undergone a period of comparative, if not complete neglect. Nikolaus Pevsner's article in the *Architectural Review* of 1937

ensured that Dresser remained in the minds of historians. Peter Floud's *Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts* exhibition of 1952 helped restore Dresser's reputation (as it did many others) and gave a wide public the opportunity of seeing an excellent small selection of his work. Tschudi Madsen and Schmutzler recognised Dresser's immense importance and Shirley Bury's article *The Silver Designs of Dr. Christopher Dresser* in *Apollo*, December, 1962, showed some of his prophetic designs for silver. Now is the time to look at the work of a designer who earlier than any other knew how to make use of the machine, who believed that nature was to be understood and not copied; and that in a healthy society good design was to be for everyone. Dresser represented the Victorian mind at its best.

Stuart Durant
Richmond
3 August 1972.

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General Principles of Art
Decorative and Pictorial

1 *The aim of all art must be the realisation of truth.*
2 Art, both Decorative and Pictorial, is capable of making utterance; the utterance made may be truth or falsehood.
3 All decorated objects should appear to be what they are; they should not pretend to be what they are not.
4 Different materials are susceptible of different treatments. What would be legitimate as a mode of 'handling' one material would be wrong as a mode of treating other materials.
5 A different art effect results from a different mode of treatment, hence every material should yield a particular art aspect.
Carved wood, carved stone, cast iron, wrought iron, and plaster work should all present individual qualities, even if so painted as to perfectly resemble in colour but one material.
6 *Art is ideal or imitative.*
7 Imitative art concerns itself with reproducing; ideal art with creating.
8 Imitative art seems to owe its origin to a sort of instinct which is shared by man and certain other of the higher animals; *i.e.* the desire to copy, mimic, re-create.
9 Ideal art has its origin in the mind, and results from no quality possessed by any other animal than man.
10 Ideal art, being purely of mental origin, is of a more noble character than imitative art, inasmuch as mind is superior to matter, or as the mental is to the physical.
11 The mental faculties are capable of being refined and elevated, or of being rendered coarse and degraded.
12 The value of a work of art may be said to depend upon the amount of mind infused into it, and the degree of refinement manifested by the utterances of the infused mind.
13 To understand a work of art is to perceive the nature of the utterances made by the producer to the observer – to comprehend the teachings of the artist.
14 Ornamental art can only be ideal. Pictorial art may be either ideal or imitative.
15 Works of pictorial or ornamental art may be the outgoings of a degraded or of an elevated mind.
16 Pictorial and decorative art should always be regarded as distinct the one from the other. They aim at the production of different results, and have little in common.
17 When viewing a good picture we look, as it were, through a sheet of glass upon an ideal scene which represents such combinations of objects, usually *having existence*, as shall convey some particular lesson or noble idea to the mind of the beholder.
In one sense a picture always pretends to be what it is not, but the frankness with which it acknowledges that it is not a real scene fully excuses it from all censure as a deceptive work. We are pleased with exhibitions of 'magic' because we *know* that we are being deceived. A wax-work figure is highly offensive, for it tries to be what it is not and does not confess it.
18 When beholding good decorative work we look upon that which beautifies what is in itself useful in such a manner as to emphasise or render more apparent the particular work which the decorated object has to perform, or as to subordinate, or exalt, the decorated work to its true position in relation to its surroundings.
In arranging a room everything should be made secondary to the living objects which are to occupy it. Next in order come pictures and works intended to give pleasure by being viewed; then the articles of furniture, and last the walls and floor, which serve as a background to all objects in the room.

A Chronological Outline of the Life of Christopher Dresser

1834
Born Glasgow, the third child of Christopher and Mary (née Nettleton), both from Yorkshire families. (Christopher Dresser 1807-1869) an Excise Officer, served in Yorkshire, Glasgow, Sussex, County Tipperary, County Cork and Hereford; he rose to the rank of Collector.)

1847
Entered the government School of Design at Somerset House (later to be transferred to Marlborough House).

1852
Awarded Scholarship of £15·00.

1853
Winner of 3 medals and 3 prizes. Re-appointed to scholarship.

1854
Re-appointed to scholarship. Prize for design of 'garment fabrics'.
Married Thirza Perry of Maidley, Shropshire (her father, William, was a lay missionary with the City of London Mission).
Botanical illustrations and diagrams (for the Department of Science and Art) and now in the print room of the Victoria and Albert Museum appear to date from this year.

1855
Patented a method of 'nature printing'.

1856
Responsible for Plate XCVIII in Owen Jones' *Grammar of Ornament*, the plate illustrated 'the geometrical arrangement of flowers' – the accompanying note stated: '... the basis of all form is geometry, the impulse which forms the surface, starting at the centre with equal force, necessarily stops at equal distances; the result is symmetry and regularity'.

1857
Began a series of articles for the Art Journal on *Botany as adapted to the Arts and Art Manufactures* which continued through 1858.
Delivered a paper *On the relation of science to ornamental art* at the Royal Institution where ideas concerning the application of natural laws to design were developed; these were to be expanded in the *Art of Decorative Design* (1862).

1858
Paper *Contributions to organgraphic botany* before the Linnean Society.

1859
The Rudiments of Botany ... and *Unity in Variety* ... published.
Paper – *On the Morphological Import of certain vegetable organs* before the Edinburgh Botanical Society.

1860
Had the degree of Doctor of Philosophy conferred by the University of Jena 'in consideration of services he has rendered to botanical Science'. (The Chair of Botany at Jena was held by M. J. Schleiden, 1804-1881, co-founder with Theodor Schwann of the theory of the cell.)
Popular Manual of Botany published. Elected Fellow of the Edinburgh Botanical Society.
Candidate for the Chair of Botany at University College, London. (The Chair was obtained by Daniel Oliver, 1830-1916.)

1861
Elected Fellow of the Linnean Society.

1862
First book on design published – *The Art of Decorative Design. Development of Ornamental Art in the International Exhibition* published (a critical guide). Supplied a number of designs for this exhibition. Although he probably knew something of Japanese design, from the small collection acquired by Henry Cole for the Museum at Marlborough House, it was due to the showing of Sir Rutherford Alcock's collection at the International Exhibition that Dresser had the opportunity of seeing a comprehensive selection of Japanese work; he made drawings and purchases from Sir Rutherford's collection.

1865
A sketchbook dating from about this year suggests an interest in the design of silver and plate and a decorative vocabulary that was already fully mature.

1867
Began a series of articles in the *Chromolithograph* (a short-lived publication in which had been incorporated *Nature and Art*) on selected examples of work exhibited in the Paris Exhibition of this year. George Augustus Sala wrote of Dresser as the designer of 'beautiful and luxurious carpets' for Messrs. Brinton & Lewis; he also observed '... for some years past the taste and skill of Dr Dresser have been put into requisition by some of the leading art manufacturers both of England and the Continent ... both as a designer of models and patterns and as a general art adviser ...'

1868
Last lectured in botany at South Kensington.

1869
Moved to Tower Cressy, a large house on Campden Hill.

1870
Began *The Principles of Decorative Design*, a series of articles in Cassell's *Technical Educator* (published in book form 1873).

1871
Paper – *Ornamentation considered as high art* before the Royal Society of Arts which set out views similar to those expressed in *The Art of Decorative Design* (1862); Dresser stated: '... that true ornamentation is of purely mental origin, and consists of symbolised imagination or emotion only. I therefore argue that ornamentation is not only fine art, but that it is high art ... even a higher art than that practised by the pictorial artist, as it is wholly of mental origin ...'
Designed a cast-iron ornamental table and hat-stand for the Coalbrookdale Company shown at the International Exhibition, South Kensington. Designed a number of brocades for J. W. & C. Ward, illustrated in the *Art-Journal* which noted that Dresser's designs '... have been of great practical value to many classes ... of British manufacturers ...'

1873
Visited the Vienna International Exhibition.

1874
Lectured on Owen Jones at Jones' Memorial Exhibition. Dresser spoke of Jones as first having taught him to think '... and what was ornament unless it embodied mind?' Also referred to 5 lectures delivered by Jones in 1849 and their formative influence. Jones was 'the greatest ornamentist of modern times'. The issue, in 20 parts, of *Studies in Design* begun, Dresser wrote that he had '... prepared this work with the hope of assisting to bring about a better style of decoration for our houses'.

1875
Began designing for Elkington & Company, makers of silver and plate.

1876
Left England to visit Japan (in a semi-official capacity) calling at the Philadelphia Centenary Exhibition en route.

1877
Spent about 4 months in Japan and presented the Emperor with a collection of examples of the work of some of the leading British manufacturers, intended to form part of the collection of the newly founded National Museum. Dresser told the Emperor: '... For years past I have been an admirer and collector of Japanese objects ...' Travelled in all about 1,700 miles in Japan visiting temples, shrines and centres of traditional manufacture. Also collected, on behalf of Tiffany & Company of New York, examples of Japanese goods including 'many objects for ordinary domestic use' which were auctioned in June, 1877.

1878
Served as Juror (class 22, paperhangings) at the International Exhibition in Paris. Earliest designs for Hukin & Heath (manufacturers of silver and plate) appear to date from this year.

1879
Entered into partnership with Charles Holme of Bradford ; trading under the name of Dresser & Holme, the company was to import Japanese and other oriental wares. Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock and members of the Japanese legation were among the distinguished guests who attended the opening of the showrooms in Farringdon Road. Began designing for the Linthorpe Art Pottery and acted as 'Art Superintendent'.

1880
Appointed Art Editor of *The Furniture Gazette*, a position which Dresser held for a year. The first issue under Dresser's editorship contains Owen Jones' Propositions from his Grammar of Ornament (1856) which began 'the decorative arts arise from, and should properly be attendant upon architecture'. Appointed 'Art Manager' of the Art Furnisher's Alliance, established to 'carry on the business of manufacturing, buying and selling high-class goods of artistic design'. (Dresser had only a nominal financial involvement in the Alliance.) Among the manufacturers and traders who had substantial holdings were George Hayter Chubb (who was appointed Chairman), Edward Cope, James Dixon & Sons and A. Lasenby Liberty ; Sir Edward Lee, who had organised the Dublin Exhibition of Arts, Industries and Manufactures of 1872 was appointed Company Secretary. Despite support by influential manufacturers the Art Furnishers' Alliance went into liquidation in May, 1883.
Decorated the interior and designed much of the furniture of Bushloe House, Wigston Magna, near Leicester, the house of Hiram B. Owston, his solicitor. (A wardrobe and dressing table from this house are to be seen in the Aesthetic Movement and Cult of Japan Exhibition – also at the Fine Art Society.)

1882
Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures, a lengthy account of the visit to Japan, was published ; in the preface Dresser wrote of 'a long and painful illness' from which he had suffered during the preparation of the book.

1883
Moved to Wellesley Lodge, Brunswick Road, Sutton (probably an indication of declining fortunes).

1886
Modern Ornamentation published (which included work by assistants and pupils), the book represented 'but one phase . . . of our office work . . . there are no examples of architectural work, of designs for furniture, glass, earthenware, metalwork or the numerous things that emanate from this office'.

1889
Moved to Elm Bank, near Barnes Railway Bridge (probably an indication of improving fortunes). Apart from designing textiles and patterns Dresser was probably designing for William Ault's pottery, for Benham and Froud, metalworkers, and for William Couper of Glasgow, glass makers.

1899
An anonymous article in *The Studio* spoke of Dresser as 'not the least, but perhaps the greatest of commercial designers, imposing his fantasy and invention upon the ordinary output of British industry'.

1904
Died on 24th November, in his sleep, at the Hotel Central, Mulhouse (Alsace), whilst on a business trip. Dresser had been accompanied by his son Louis.
The net value of Dresser's personal estate was £2,157.5.3. *The Builder* obituary (10th December, 1904) spoke of Dresser's last years : '. . . he spent most of his time in preparing designs for manufacturers and in the enjoyment of his garden and flowers.
'He was a most genial companion and interesting talker, and never tired of discussion on Art and the habits of the East, trying to trace their histories by their ornamental forms as a philologist does by their language . . .'

Professorships in Botany held by Dresser

Professor of Botany applied to the Fine Arts in the Department of Science and Art, South Kensington (1860-62) (Lecturer probably from 1854)

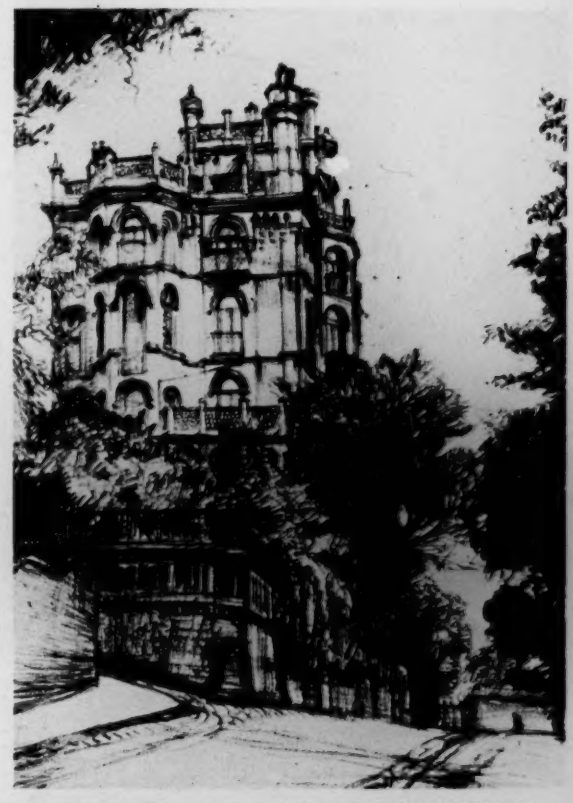
Professor of Botany at the London Hospital Medical School (1860-62)

Professor of Botany at the Ladies' School (1860)

Professor of Scientific Botany at the Royal Polytechnic Institution (1860-62)

Professor of Ornamental Art and Botany in the Crystal Palace, Sydenham (1862)

The datings of Dresser's professorships are to a great extent a matter of conjecture, on the birth certificates of his children he merely styled himself 'botanist' or 'professor of botany' and specified no institutions. The last time he described himself as 'Professor of Botany' was on the birth certificate of Stanley Lewis Dresser, born in 1867. On the birth certificate of Ella Rosomond Dresser, born in 1872, he described himself as an Architect. (Sources as to the institutions where Dresser taught have been the title pages of his various books where the professorships are listed after his name.)



Dresser's house, Tower Cressy, in Aubrey Road, Campden Hill. Built 1854 by Thomas Page, 1803-77 (the Architect of Westminster Bridge) Dresser lived there between 1869-82. Drawing by Frank L. Emanuel (reproduced by kind permission of Kensington Public Library).

Pottery

Christopher Dresser's designs for pottery were primarily carried out in a new factory at Linthorpe near Middlesbrough in Yorkshire.

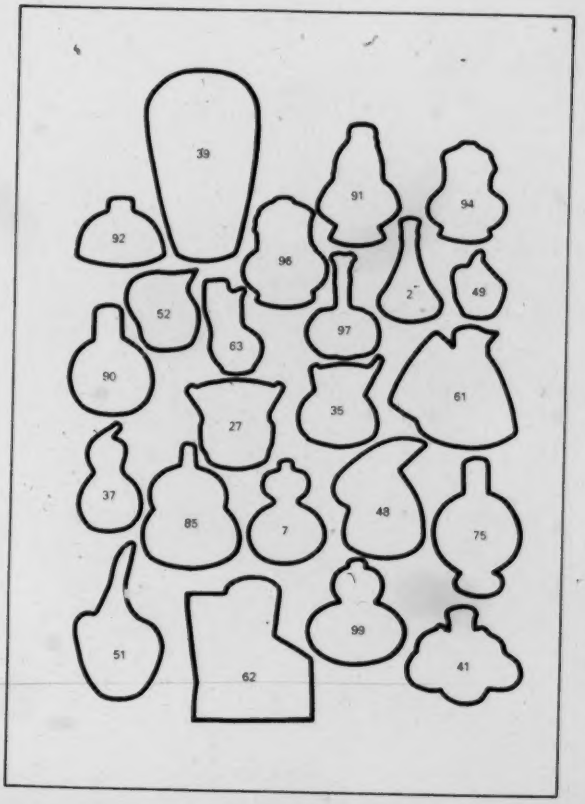
In 1879, the Linthorpe pottery went into production as a direct result of Dresser meeting John Harrison, a local landowner who was interested in Dresser's theories on Art. It was decided to start a pottery, using the local clay on the site of Mr. Harrison's 'Sun Brick Works'. Henry Tooth, an artist, was engaged as the manager; he had little experience of pottery but proved to have found his métier. Christopher Dresser was appointed Art Director and responsible for design until some time in 1882, and all his designs were impressed with his facsimile signature. From 1882, painted decoration became a more important feature, although Dresser's influence was still apparent in many designs; and the impressed Linthorpe mark took a new form incorporating the outline of a bowl.

From its inception the pottery was well received and the output increased considerably. Dresser's work can be divided into three groups, for the first and most severe, where the shape was the important factor, he drew inspiration from numerous sources especially Japan and Peru. The second group were incised or moulded in relief with geometric and stylised floral motifs and the third were painted or moulded with botanical studies. The glazes of these early Linthorpe pots were their principal decorative feature and presumably the work of Henry Tooth. The slip was combined with various metal oxides to produce colour effects unlike anything made in Europe at the time.

Drawings of Linthorpe pottery designed by Christopher Dresser illustrated in 19th Century English Ceramic Art by J. F. Blacker page 405.

In the company prospectus of *circa* 1880 (reproduced in the catalogue of Linthorpe Pottery by the Teesside Museums and Art Galleries Services, 1970), it states that Dresser's signature is 'a trade mark and guarantee of their genuineness, and of their being made in strict accordance with the principles of decorative art'. It is interesting to note that the prospectus puts forward a programme for executing wall papers, glass and metal, presumably designed by Christopher Dresser, which was never carried out at Linthorpe.

Henry Tooth left Linthorpe in 1882 and went into partnership with the potter, William Ault, and founded the Bretby Art Pottery. William Ault left Bretby in 1887 to form the Ault Pottery at Swadlincote. Here, Christopher Dresser was to continue in pottery design and little is known about his work; Wakefield suggests in *Victorian Pottery* that he was designing for William Ault from *circa* 1892 to 1896. Some of his designs were similar to those produced at Linthorpe, while others were quite different. The *Pottery Gazette* of January 1895 illustrates 'new designs' by Dresser for William Ault; and in February 1898, a series of 'egg vases' probably by Dresser. His designs were still in production by William Ault, five years after his death; the *Pottery Gazette* illustrates vases, in April 1908 and April 1909, that we know to be Dresser designs.



1 5 6

3 4

8 9 10

Catalogue

Unless otherwise stated, the measurements given are the heights of the objects and all marks on the pottery are impressed on the base. The name Chr Dresser is in all cases a facsimile signature. The monogram HT is that of the Linthorpe Pottery manager Henry Tooth, the impressed numbers are design numbers. In some cases the marks are obliterated owing to the thickness of the glaze.

Linthorpe Pottery

1
Vase with dimpled body, the brown glaze with green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 24
23.2cm / 9⅛in

2
Vase with a brown glaze with pale green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 35
24.1cm / 9½in

3
Vase supported on three feet impressed with stylised floral patterns covered in an olive glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 65
Diameter 13.0cm / 5⅛in

4
Vase supported on three feet impressed with geometric patterns covered in a green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser 65
Diameter 13.0cm / 5⅛in

5
Vase with a brown glaze with green and white markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 106
25.4cm / 10in

6
Vase with mottled green, blue and brown glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 118
15.9cm / 6¼in

7
Vase of double gourd shape, the mottled brown glaze with marbled green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 141
17.4cm / 6⅞in

8
Vase of double gourd shape with a yellow glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 141
18.4cm / 7¼in

9
Vase of double gourd shape with a turquoise glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 142
21.0cm / 8¼in

10
'Solifleur' vase, the green and brown glaze with streaked markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 145
19.7cm / 7¾in

11 13 14

11
Vase glazed in shades of green and red.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 157
30.5cm / 12in

12 *Not illustrated*
Vase with red and shaded green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 157
30.5cm / 12in

13
Vase with an amber and olive green glaze impressed with bands of geometric patterns.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 157. Incised monogram JP
30.8cm / 12⅛in

14
Vase with three dimples and folded rim covered in a marbled blue, brown and green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 163
14.9cm / 5⅞in

15
Large vase, the neck glazed brown and the body green with lilies and irises in high relief.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 168
48.9cm / 19¼in
Compare with a similar vase illustrated by H. Wakefield in *Victorian Pottery* plate 87, and a drawing in *Nineteenth-century English Ceramic Art* by J. F. Blacker, page 413.

15

16 17 18

16
Vase with a mottled ochre, green and blue glaze and impressed with geometric pink and brown medallions.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 169 and incised monogram C.S.P.
26.0cm / 10¼in

17
Bowl of organic form, the exterior glazed brown, the interior mottled green and brown.
Marks: LINTHORPE HT 178
Diameter 15.2cm / 6in
A similar bowl, signed, was shown at the exhibition of Linthorpe Pottery organised by the Teesside Museums and Art Galleries Service, 1970. Catalogue no. 178.

19 20 21

18
Bowl with brown glazed foliate rim and mottled green markings with a row of double applied loop handles alternating with flower heads.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 179
Diameter 20.6cm / 8⅛in
The shape is illustrated by Blacker in *Nineteenth-century English Ceramic Art*, page 405, top right, and in the *Pottery Gazette*, January, 1886, page 60.

19
Dish decorated in the centre with raised blossom glazed turquoise, the mottled red border with impressed patterns.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 185
Diameter 25.4cm / 10in

22

20
Bowl glazed brown and pierced with interlacing ovals and incised with flowering plants.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 186 and incised decorator's initials A.M.
Diameter 22.9cm / 9in

21
Vase with incised geometric patterns and a streaky green and brown glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 218 decorator's initials WF
19.4cm / 7⅝in

22
Large vase with upright handles, the brown glaze with grey and white markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 266?
47.3cm / 18⅝in
The shape is illustrated by Blacker in *Nineteenth-century English Ceramic Art*, page 413; and a similar vase is illustrated by C. Bracegirdle in LINTHORPE: The forgotten pottery, *Country Life*, April, 1971, plate 1.

23
Bottle of depressed form, the ridged body glazed brown with green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 267
14.6cm / 5¾in

24 *Not illustrated*
Bottle of depressed form, the ridged body glazed brown with green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 267
14.3cm / 5⅝in

25
Vase of ovoid shape incised with brown and red glazed patterns on a mottled green and brown ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser 270
incised decorator's monogram I.S.
23.2cm / 9⅛in

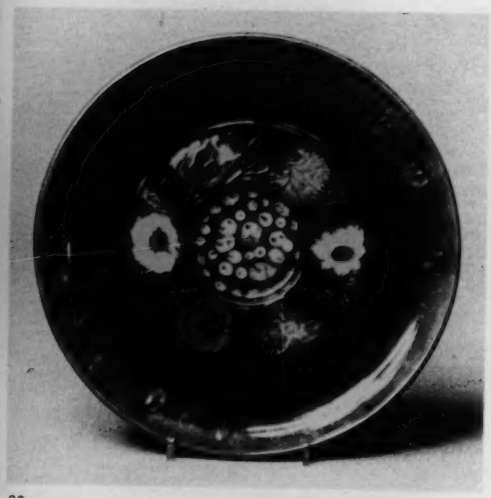
26
Vase of flattened spherical form painted with white flowering branches on a pale yellow ground, the sides painted with stylised flower heads on a blue ground, the underside glazed green and supported on twelve legs.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 277
Diameter 23.5cm / 9¼in

27
Vessel of Peruvian inspiration with twin spouts, the body modelled and impressed with a human mask covered in a mottled green, blue and brown glaze, the eyes turquoise and the lips red.
Marks: A square stamp LINTHORPE
Chr Dresser 296
16.2cm / 6⅜in
For the model see Blacker, *Nineteenth-century English Ceramic Art*, page 409, bottom right.

23 25

26

28



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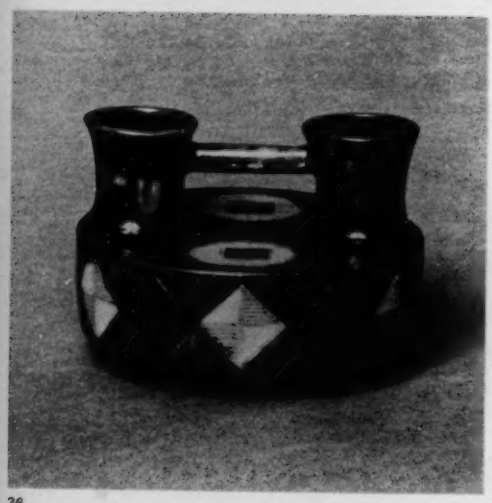


36

38 42

28
Vessel of Peruvian influence with twin spouts, the mottled brown glaze with green markings on the crown, the mask with red lips.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 296
16.8cm / 6⅝in
A similar vessel from the Dorman Memorial Museum, Middlesbrough, is illustrated by Wakefield in *Victorian Pottery*, plate 86.

29 *Not illustrated*
Dish with raised garland of flowers glazed ochre, turquoise and brown on a dull olive green ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 299
Diameter 30.1cm / 11⅞in

30
Circular dish with a raised design of flowers glazed brown, yellow and red on a mottled green ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 299
Diameter 30.8cm / 12⅛in

31 *Not illustrated*
Salt cellar of shallow circular form, glazed olive green with incised patterns, plated rim.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 305 decorator's monogram AB
Diameter 6.0cm/2⅜in

32 *Not illustrated*
Pair of Salt cellars painted with blossom in black on an ochre ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 305
Diameter 6.0cm / 2⅜in

33 *Not illustrated*
Salt cellar of shallow circular shape glazed plum.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 305
Diameter 6.0cm / 2⅜in

34 *Not illustrated*
A mustard pot glazed olive green with incised markings, plated hinged cover.
Marks: Chr Dresser HT 306
7.3cm / 2⅞in

35
Vessel of sea urchin form with two spouts, the whole glazed brown.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 312
18.4cm / 7¼in
A vessel of similar shape is illustrated by Blacker, page 409, bottom left.

36
Vessel with twin apertures, glazed green with incised geometric patterns glazed pale blue, brown and ochre.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 314
Diameter 14.6cm / 5¾in
The form is illustrated by Blacker, page 411, top centre.

37
Bottle of double gourd shape, dimpled, the brown glazed with marbled light brown and white markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 326
19.4cm / 7⅝in
A similar bottle is illustrated on the cover of the *Linthorpe Pottery* catalogue, published by the Teesside Museums and Art Galleries Service, 1970.

38
Bottle of dimpled double gourd shape with marbled green and brown markings.
Marks: indistinctly impressed
LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 327
19.7cm / 7¾in

39
Large vase covered in a brown glaze with mottled ochre markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 327
49.5cm / 19½in

40 *Not illustrated*
Vase with a central aperture surrounded by five onion shapes, the whole glazed yellow.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 330
Diameter 16.5cm / 6½in

41
Vase with a central neck and five onion shapes glazed brown with mottled white markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 330
10.8cm / 4¼in

42
Jug of hemispherical shape with projecting spout, glazed brown with marbled green and white markings and incised concentric circles.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 335
Diameter 19.4cm / 7⅝in

43 44 45

46 47

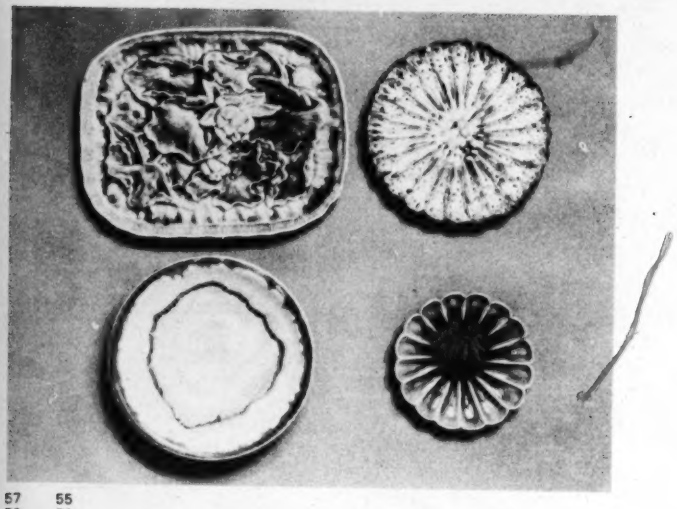
43
Double handled vase decorated on both sides with brown scroll patterns in relief against a marbled green ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 336
Diameter 19.1cm / 7½in
Compare with a vase illustrated by Blacker, page 411, bottom right.

44
Jug decorated on both sides with coiled patterns in relief, glazed green.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 337
19.7cm / 7¾in

45
Double handled vase decorated on both sides with coiled patterns in relief, glazed brown against a mottled green and blue ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT in relief 337
20.3cm / 8in

46
Double handled vase with raised fan patterns glazed brown and ochre against a brown ground with green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 337
20.3cm/8in

53 54



57 55
58 56

47
Double handled vase, decorated on both sides with a raised concentric star pattern glazed brown against a mottled brown and green ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 337
20.3cm / 8in

48
Jug incised with lines and glazed brown with spattered green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 341
18.7cm / 7⅜in

49
Jug incised with a stylised floral design and covered in a mottled green-blue glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 342
16.5cm / 6½in
For the shape see Blacker, page 409, top left.

50 *Not illustrated*
Jug with pronounced lip, covered in a streaked brown glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT in relief 346
23.8cm / 9⅜in

51
Jug with pronounced lip, the companion to no. 50.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT in relief 346
23.8cm / 9⅜in

52
'Camel back' jug with a mottled green and brown glaze and incised geometric patterns.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 347
18.1cm / 7⅛in
A similar jug was shown at a loan Exhibition of *LINTHORPE ART WARE* at the Dorman Memorial Museum, 1906. Cat. no. 5.

53
Double handled vase incised with a stylised floral design within geometric borders, the neck glazed brown and the body green.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 392
27.3cm / 10¾in

54
Double handled vase incised with stylised floral and geometric patterns, the glaze shading from brown to green to blue.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 393
20.0cm / 7⅞in

55
Scalloped dish, the brown glaze with mottled white markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 434
Diameter 23.2cm / 9⅛in

56
Scalloped dish with an olive green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 436
Diameter 17.4cm / 6⅞in

57
Rectangular dish of Japanese inspiration with a raised decoration of water lilies, glazed in shades of ochre and olive.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 441
Length 33.7cm / 13¼in

58
Shallow bowl, the interior glazed ochre, yellow and red, the underside glazed green with raised bead borders.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 451
Diameter 25.1cm / 9⅞in

59
Large tri-lobed jar with three ring handles, the body glazed green and brown with mottled markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
raised numeral 452
31.8cm / 12½in

60
Vase of baluster shape, the neck glazed brown, the body dark green with lighter green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 477
31.4cm / 12⅜in

61
Jug with a rich brown glaze spreading over the green glaze on the lower half, the base glazed blue.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 555
20.6cm / 8⅛in

62
Jug, the pyramid body with chamfered corners leading into the octagonal neck, the brown glaze of the neck running over the blue and green body.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 563
16.5cm / 6½in

63
Jug with a brown glazed neck and handle flecked with yellow, the lower part of the body shaded from green to blue.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 602
21.0cm / 8¼in

64 *Not illustrated*
Cream jug with an olive glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 626
Diameter 8.9cm / 3½in

65
Cream jug painted with a white flowering branch on a pale yellow ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 626
Diameter 8.9cm / 3½in

66
Double handled bowl, the exterior with caramel glazed rim, the body turquoise with green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 637
Diameter 12.7cm / 5in

59 60

68 69 68 67

67
Coffee cup and saucer painted with flowering branches in black on an indian yellow ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 639 painter's initials W.E.
Cup 7.0cm / 2¾in

68
Coffee set comprising a coffee pot and cover, four coffee cans and four saucers, each piece painted with black flowering branches on an indian yellow ground.
Marks: cans and saucers, LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 640 coffee pot, LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 646
cans 7.0cm / 3in, coffee pot 24.8cm / 9¾in

69
Cup and saucer painted with blossom in black on an ochre ground.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT the cup 641 the saucer 639
Cup 7.0cm / 3in

70
Coffee pot, the neck glazed brown running into green and blue at the base
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 647
22.2cm / 8¾in

71
Jug with brown glazed neck and green body shading to blue at the base.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
HT 784
17.1cm / 6¾in
A similar jug is illustrated in the *Pottery Gazette*, July, 1886, Page 600

65 66 70

71 73 74

76 77 78

72 *Not illustrated*
Vase glazed yellow.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT 848
13.3cm / 5¼in

73
Vase with brown glazed neck and mottled green and blue body.
Marks: LINTHORPE HT 848
13.3cm / 5¼in

74
Vase with globular body incised with geometric patterns and flower heads, covered with a mottled green and brown glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT
17.8cm / 7in

75
Moulded vase of ring form, the centre pierced with a flower and leaves, covered in a mottled green, brown and blue glaze.
Marks: Chr Dresser
22.2cm / 8¾in

76
Moulded vase of ring form, the centre pierced with a flower and leaves, the glaze mottled green, yellow and brown.
Marks: Chr Dresser HT
21.0cm / 8¼in

77
Double gourd vase with a streaky brown glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT
16.5cm / 6½in

78
Vase with folded rim and an olive green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT
8.9cm / 3½in

79
Moulded flask or water bottle with applied strap handles, glazed brown with mottled pale brown and green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT
33.0cm / 13in

80
Vase with three rows of dimples, each with a cabochon in relief, the lower part with incised geometric patterns, the whole covered in a mottled brown and green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser 169 ?
26.7cm / 10½in

81
Vase with incised geometric patterns and a streaked brown and green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
16.5cm / 6½in

82
Dish incised with a bird and a garland of flowering foliage with a mottled ochre and green glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT
Diameter 27.3cm / 10¾in

83
Vase glazed brown with streaked white markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
17.8cm / 7in

84
Vase of double gourd shape with applied handles, covered in a marbled green and brown glaze.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
27.6cm / 10⅞in

85
Moulded vessel of Peruvian inspiration, the spout emerging from the hollow handles, the body impressed with a geometric design, the brown glaze with ochre and green markings.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser
20.3cm / 8in
For the shape see Blacker, page 409, centre top.

86
Vase incised with geometric and stylised foliate patterns, glazed in shades of brown and green.
Marks: LINTHORPE Chr Dresser HT incised monogram W.H.
21.9cm / 8⅝in

79

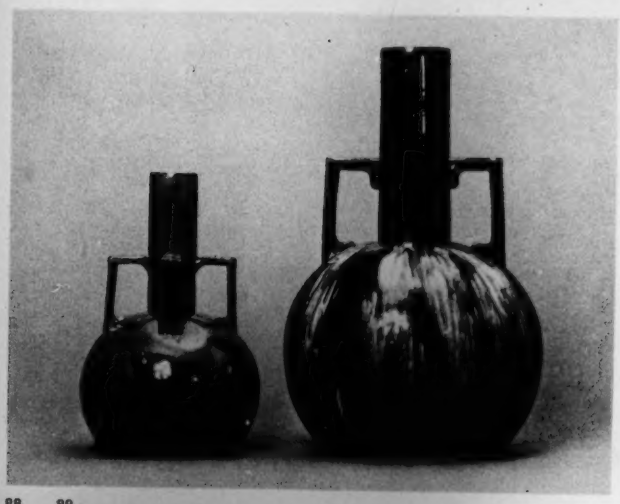
80 81

82

Ault Pottery

87 *Not illustrated*
Vase of flattened disc shape moulded with a concentric star design on both sides, the handles with raised bead work, the neck glazed blue running into a chocolate brown body.
Marks: a moulded vase and AULT 129
20.0cm / 7⅞in

83 84 86



88 89

93

88
Large moulded vase, glazed brown, the cylindrical neck and globular body joined by four angular ridged handles.
Marks: a moulded vase and AULT
Chr Dresser 247
49.2cm / 19⅜in

89
Large vase with cylindrical neck and globular body, joined by two right angle handles, glazed brown with blue, white and red markings.
Marks: Chr Dresser 247
71.8cm / 28¼in
A vase of similar form, decorated, and termed 'Creke ware' as illustrated in the *Pottery Gazette*, April, 1909, page 428.

90
Vase with four grotesque mask handles, the horns forming the handles, the whole glazed turquoise.
Marks: Chr Dresser 254
22.5cm / 8⅞in
A similar vase glazed yellow is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

91
Vase modelled with four grotesque masks, their tongues forming handles and supporting the neck which is glazed turquoise, the body green.
Marks: Chr Dresser 248
32.4cm/12¾in
A similar vase is illustrated in the *Pottery Gazette*, April, 1909, page 428.

92
Vase of circular dome shape with a streaked green glaze over a white ground.
Marks: Chr Dresser 263
Diameter 23.5cm / 9¼in

93
Vase of circular dome shape painted with a butterfly and grasses on a cream ground, by Clarissa Ault.
Marks: Chr Dresser 263 painted initials C.J.A.
Diameter 11.4cm / 4½in

94
Vase of double gourd shape with four applied green goat masks, their beards forming handles, the olive ground incised with geometric and stylised floral patterns.
Marks: Chr Dresser 138
27.3cm / 10¾in

95
Vase of double gourd shape with four applied goat masks, their beards forming handles, glazed in shades of green.
Marks: Chr Dresser 318
26.0cm / 10¼in
A similar vase from the Victoria and Albert Museum (circ 316-1953) is illustrated by Wakefield in *Victorian Pottery*, plate 88.

95

96
Vase of double gourd shape with four goat masks, their beards forming handles, with a brown aventurine glaze.
Marks: Chr Dresser 318
26.3cm / 10⅜in
Vase of similar form is illustrated in the *Pottery Gazette*, April, 1908, page 443.

97
Vase moulded in vegetable form, the cylindrical neck glazed brown at the top, the body green with white markings.
Marks: Chr Dresser 328 ?
22.2cm / 8¾in

98
Double handled vase moulded with a concentric star design, glazed olive green on a brown ground.
Marks: a moulded vase and AULT
18.7cm / 7⅜in

99
Vase of compressed double gourd shape, glazed green.
Marks: Chr Dresser
14.0cm / 5½in

100
Vase of bottle shape with three dimples, each with an applied flower head, glazed yellow.
Marks: Chr Dresser
21.6cm / 8½in

101 *Not illustrated*
Vase with three dimples, each with an applied flower head, the brown and blue-green glaze mottled.
Marks: Chr Dresser
21.6cm / 8½in

98 100

Drawings of Linthorpe pottery designed by Christopher Dresser illustrated in 19th Century English Ceramic Art by J. F. Blacker, page 409.

Dresser's designs for Clutha glass are especially featured in the anonymous Studio article on his work in 1899 (see bibliography). The designs illustrated in the *Studio* reveal a particular sympathy for the medium of blown glass and they show the consummate understanding of techniques that is Dresser's hallmark.

Dresser, writing on glass in the *Technical Educator* (1870-78) has the following to say:
'... Glass has a molten state in which it can be blown into the most beautiful of shapes ... this process ... is the work of but a few seconds ... if a material is worked in its most simple and befitting manner, the results obtained are more beautiful than those which are arrived at by any roundabout method of production.'

The shapes of Dresser's glass are frequently original. But sometimes based on the forms of ancient models. One of the shapes illustrated in the *Studio* article of 1899 derives from an early Peruvian vase, a shape that is used in some of the Linthorpe pottery designs (see cat. nos. 27 and 28). Clearly Dresser was as interested in the colouring of glass as he was in experimenting with glazes, he appears also to have been influenced by the colouring of Roman and Middle Eastern glass.

It is assumed that Dresser's designs for James Couper & Sons' Clutha glass date from the mid-1890s.

(George Walton, 1867-1933, architect and designer, also produced designs for Clutha glass. Nikolaus Pevsner suggests Walton's designs – far less inventive than Dresser's – as probably dating from the years 1897-98, Dresser's designs are probably earlier than this – see Nikolaus Pevsner, *George Walton*, Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, 3rd series, vol. XLVI, 1939 – reprinted in Nikolaus Pevsner, *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design*, London, 1968.)

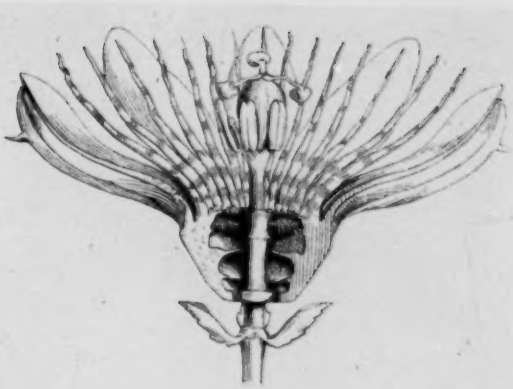
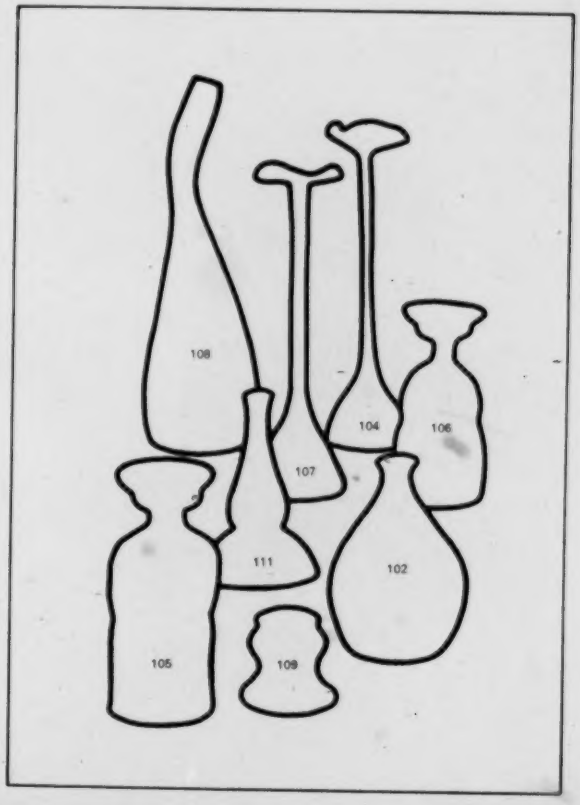


Fig. 165.

Passiflora alata, portion of the flower.
Unity in Variety, London 1860.



to the organs just enumerated we sometimes
t (*Fig.* 165) and the disk (*Figs.* 166, 167).

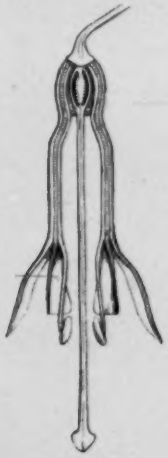


Fig. 167.

owever, are merely modified staminal whorls.
ey are also one with the other floral parts.

Section of a Fuschia showing the disk.
Unity in Variety, London 1860.

103 110 112

James Couper & Sons of Glasgow

102
Clutha vase of amber tint with striations.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED and a trade mark.
20.0cm / 7⅞in
Several Clutha vases designed by Christopher Dresser are illustrated in *The Studio*, volume 15, pages 104-106.

103
'Solifleur' vase of translucent green tint with opaque white markings.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED
18.4cm / 7¼in

104
Tall Clutha vase of pale green tint with red and green striations and silver foil.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED and a trade mark.
42.8cm / 16⅞in

105
Clutha vase of amber tint with opaque olive combed decoration.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED and a trade mark.
23.8cm / 9⅜in

106
Vase of orange tint with numerous silver foil insertions.
Marks: acid etched trade mark.
23.8cm / 9⅜in

107
Clutha vase of pink tint with green and white striations and silver foil insertions.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA J.C. & S. REGISTERED
40.0cm / 15¾in

108
Gourd shaped vessel of green and red tint with silver insertions.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED and a trade mark.
48.6cm / 19⅛in

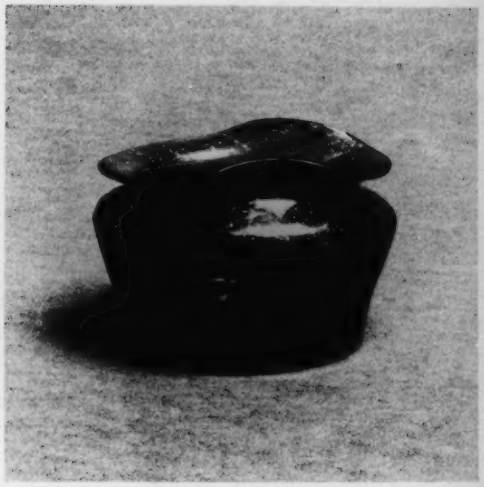
109
Small vase of yellow tint with white and green markings.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED
8.9cm / 3½in

110
Tall Clutha vase of pale green tint with red striations and inset silver foil.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED and a trade mark.
42.5cm / 16¾in

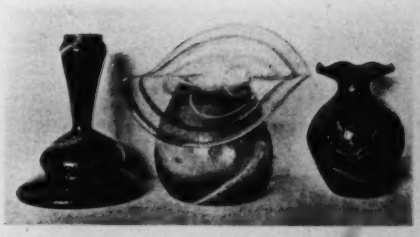
111
Clutha vase of pale green tint with red striations.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED
20.6cm / 8⅛in

112
Vase with propeller body of pale green tint with aventurine marking.
Unmarked
28.6cm / 11¼in
A vase of similar form designed by Chr Dresser is illustrated in *The Studio*, volume 15, page 104.

113
Vase of green tint with red striations and silver foil.
Marks: acid etched CLUTHA DESIGNED BY C.D. REGISTERED and a trade mark
5.7cm / 2¼in



113



Glass vessels designed by Christopher Dresser, illustrated in *The Studio*, Volume 15, Page 105.

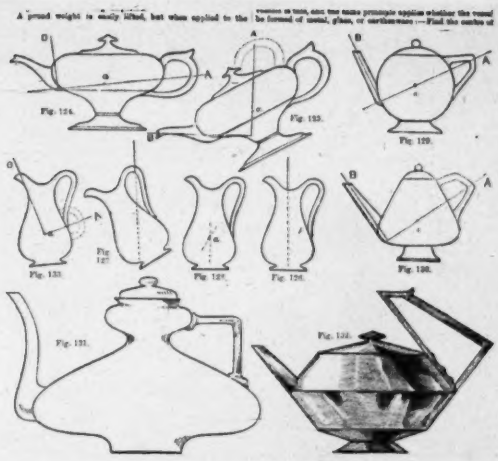
Metalwork

Dresser's designs for silver and plate appear to us his most revolutionary ; they suggest little of the period in which they were created. He applied his own rigorous formulae to designs for silver, formulae that would have inhibited more timid designers. The silver design is organic in a way that is not immediately apparent. Superficially it resembles the work of Josef Hoffmann in the 1900s and Puiforcat in the 1920s. There is the same geometrical expertise, but its elegance is organic and one recognises the same sense of vitality that is such a feature of Dresser's ornamental design.

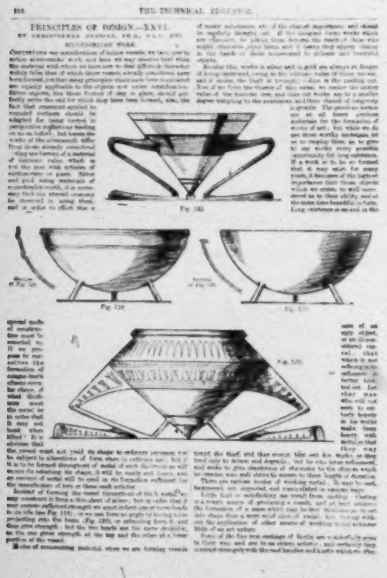
Dresser greatly admired the work of the silversmiths of the Islamic cultures and Japan and his admiration of their understanding of the nature of materials is reflected in his design. But there is never any attempt at slavishly imitating Oriental work.

Dresser paid particular attention to economic use of materials in his designs for silver.

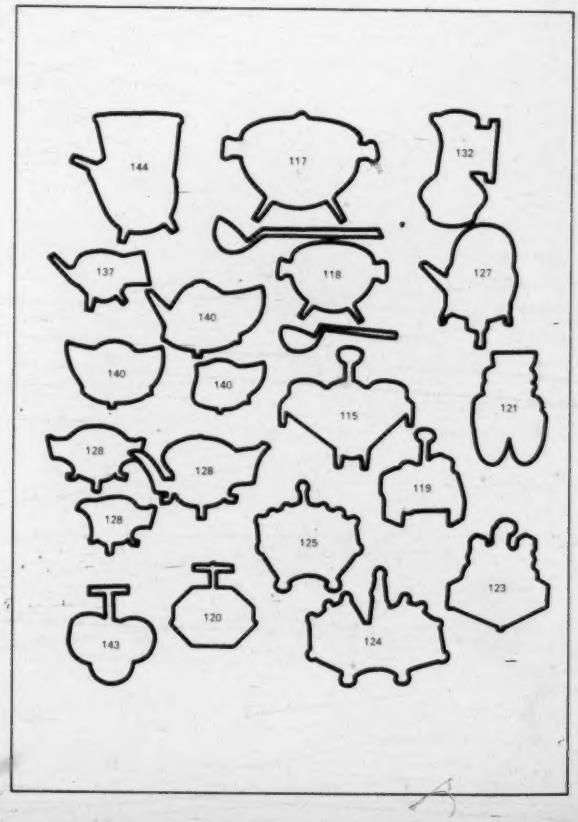
Dresser designed for a number of manufacturers of silver and plate, including Hukin & Heath from about 1878, designs obviously by him being produced well into the 1890s. Dresser appears to have designed for Elkington & Company from 1875 until 1888. Designs by Dresser for James Dixon & Sons were shown in a catalogue of theirs issued in the early 1890s, but the main period of his design for them appears to have been between 1879 and 1882. Reproduced in Nikolaus Pevsner's article *'Christopher Dresser, Industrial Designer'* (see bibliography) are three pages from Dresser's account books for 1881 which show sketches of about 35 or so designs for Dison & Sons.



In nineteen cases out of twenty, handles are so placed on teapots and similar vessels that they are in use lifted only by a force capable of raising two or three such vessels . . . The law governing the application of handle and spout to vessels is this . . . Find the centre of gravity . . . draw a line through the centre of the handle, and continue it through the centre of gravity of the vessel. The spout must now be at right angles to this line . . . this law, if obeyed, will always enable liquid to be poured from a vessel without its appearing heavier than it actually is . . .'
The Technical Educator, London 1870-73.

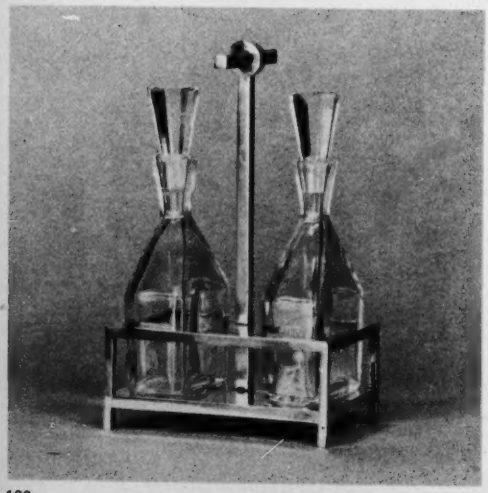


'Silver and gold being materials of considerable worth, it is necessary that the utmost economy be observed in using them . . . instead of forming the vessel throughout of thick metal, we may construct it from a thin sheet of silver . . . modes of economising material, when we are forming vessels of substances, are of the utmost importance . . . If the designer forms works which are expensive, he places them beyond the reach of those who might otherwise enjoy them . . .'
The Technical Educator, London 1870-73.



114

116



122

J. W. Hukin & J. T. Heath (Birmingham and London)

114
Claret jug, the pear-shaped clear glass body with electro-plated mounts.
Marks: H & H DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER 2045 registration mark for 26th March, 1879.
24.1cm / 9½in
A similar claret jug is illustrated by Patricia Wardle in *Victorian Silver and Silver-plate*, plate 53, by S. T. Madsen *Sources of Art Nouveau*, page 153, and by R. Schmutzler *Art Nouveau*, Page 91. Another is in the Victoria and Albert Museum Circ 186-1966.

115
Electro-plated stand, fitted with six clear glass tumblers each with a wheel-engraved border.
Marks: H & H DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER 2268 registration mark for 11th April, 1878.
15.2cm/6in

116.
Electro-plated soup tureen, cover and ladle with ivory handles and knop, standing on three feet.
Marks: H & H 2123 Registration mark for 28th July, 1880.
Diameter 24.1cm / 9½in

117
Electro-plated soup tureen, cover and ladle with ebony handles and knop, standing on three feet.
Marks: H & H 2123 DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER the ladle registered 28th July, 1880.
Diameter 24.1cm / 9½in
A similar tureen from the Handley-Read Collection was illustrated in the Royal Academy of Arts catalogue 1972, *Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Art* D161 and D162.

118
Small tureen, cover and ladle with ivory handles and knop, standing on three feet.
Marks: H & H 2188 registration mark for 28th July, 1880.
Diameter 14.6cm / 5¾in

119
Electro-plated four bottle cruet frame fitted with three panel cut clear glass bottles.
Marks: H & H DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER registration mark for 11th April, 1878.
Diameter 11.4cm / 4½in

120
Cruet frame in electro-plated silver, of hexagonal form with six small legs, the bottles missing.
Marks: H & H 1867 DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER 11th April, 1878.
Diameter 10.8cm / 4¼in

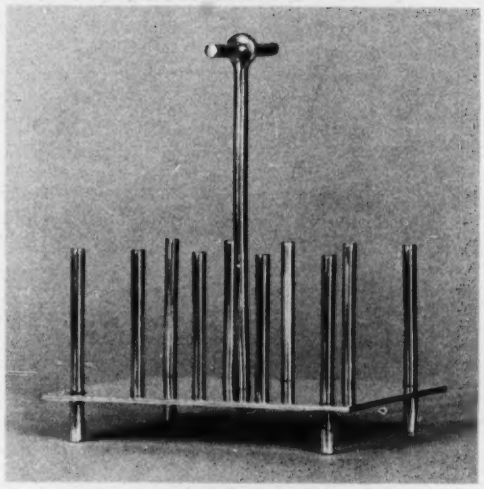
121
Electro-plated cruet frame fitted with panel cut clear glass oil and vinegar bottles and mustard and pepper containers with plated mounts.
Marks: H & H 2185 DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER registration mark for 8th October, 1878.
18.4cm / 7¼in
A six bottle cruet of the same form is illustrated by Nikolaus Pevsner in an article on Christopher Dresser in the *Architectural Review*, March 1937, page 185.

122
Electro-plated cruet frame with oil and vinegar bottles in panel cut clear glass.
Marks: H & H 1953 DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER registration mark for 8th October, 1878.
21.0cm / 8¼in
A four bottle cruet of the same form is illustrated by Nikolaus Pevsner in the *Architectural Review*, March 1937, page 184.

123
Silver cruet frame fitted with four panel cut glass bottles, the glass stoppers with silver mounts.
Marks: J.W.H. and J.T.H. London 1881
14.0cm / 5½in

124
Electro-plated toast rack with moveable supports hinged at the base.
Marks: H & H 2555 registration mark for 9th May, 1881.
12.7cm / 5in
A similar toast rack is illustrated by P. Wardle in *Victorian Silver and Silver-plate*, page 177, and by Shirley Bury in *Apollo*, December, 1962.
12.7cm / 5in

125
Electro-plated toast rack with fixed supports.
Marks: H & H 2556 registration mark for 9th May, 1881.
12.7cm / 5in



126

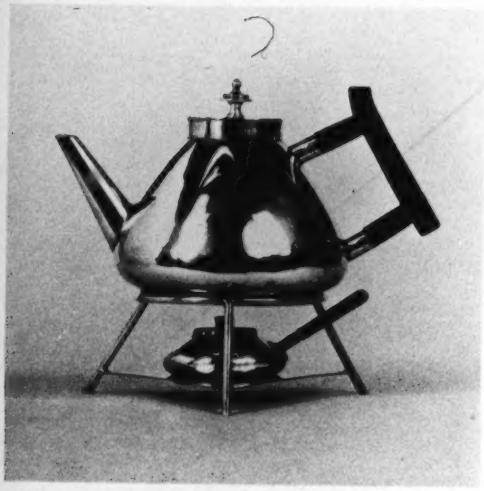
129

126
Electro-plated toast rack, the four corner supports also forming the short legs.
Marks: H & H 1987 DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER registration mark for 9th October, 1878.
13.6cm / 5⅜in

127
Electro-plated kettle with plaited wicker handle, resting on a three legged stand with burner.
Marks: H & H 2125 registration mark for 1879.
15.9cm / 6¼in
Hukin & Heath made a very similar kettle, no. 2110, signed by Christopher Dresser.

128
Electro-plated tea set, comprising teapot, cream jug, and sugar bowl, the teapot with ebony handle and finial.
Marks: H & H 1888 DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER registration mark for 25th November, 1880.
Teapot 11.4cm / 4½in

129
Electro-plated teapot of Japanese inspiration, engraved with leafy branches and insects.
Marks: H & H 2103 DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER
10.2cm / 4in



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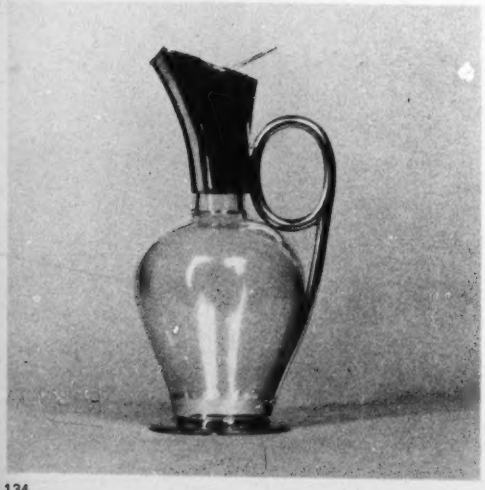
131



134

130
Electro-plated teapot with triangular stand and burner, ebony handle
Marks: H & H DESIGNED BY DR. C. DRESSER the kettle with registration mark for 6th May, 1878, the stand with a further registration

131
Claret jug, the Doulton stoneware pottery body decorated with floral designs by Florence E. Lee dated 1882, the silver plated mounts by Hukin & Heath.
Marks: H & H registration mark for 8th October, 1878.

132
Claret jug with clear glass body and electro-plated mounts with ebony handle.
Marks: H & H registration mark for 9th May, 1881.
21.6cm / 8½in
Several variations of this claret jug exist and they are attributed to Chr Dresser.

133 *Not illustrated*
Claret jug with clear glass body and electro-plated mounts with ebony handle.
Marks: H & H registration mark for 9th May, 1881.
22.2cm / 8¾in

James Dixon & Sons

134
Claret jug with clear glass body and silver plated mounts with hinged cover.
Marks: J. D. & S. 2548 AN facsimile signature, Chr Dresser
25.7cm / 10⅛in

135
Electro-plated toast rack.
Marks: J. D. & S. 66 facsimile signature, Chr Dresser
14.0cm / 5½in

136 *Not illustrated*
Electro-plated teapot supported on three legs.
Marks: J. D. & S. facsimile signature, Chr Dresser registration mark for 25th April, 1880.
10.8cm / 4¼in

137
Silver teapot supported on three legs.
Marks: J.W.D. London 1880.
10.8cm / 4¼in

138
Electro-plated teapot supported on six short legs and with ebony handle.
Marks: J. D. & S. 2277 fascimile signature, Chr Dresser
22.2cm / 8¾in
Illustrated by Bevis Hillier in *Art Deco*, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1971, Cat. no. 150.

139
Claret jug with Linthorpe pottery body and electro-plated mounts with ebony handle.
Marks: the mounts J. D. & S. F5672
the body LINTHORPE 1517
25.4cm / 10in
The lid bears an inscription dated 1884.

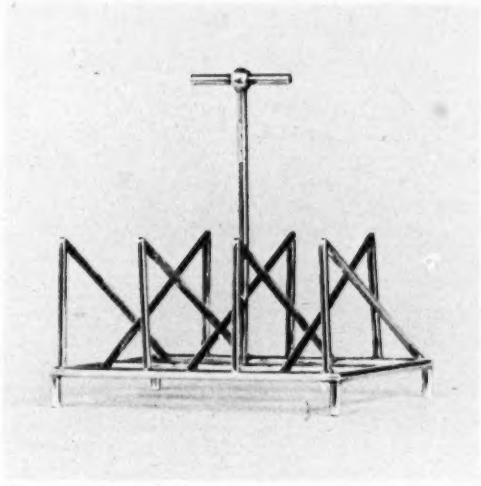
Elkington & Co.

140
Silver teaset, comprising a teapot, cream jug, and sugar bowl, each piece decorated with bands of horizontal grooves and supported on four feet, the teapot with ivory finial.
Marks: Elkington & Co. L16676 Rd 22864 Birmingham 1884
The teapot 10.8cm / 4¼in
The design attributed to Chr Dresser.
Illustrated in *Art Deco*, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1971, Cat. no. 149.

141
Silver claret jug with hinged lid, the body and handle decorated with bands of horizontal grooves.
Marks: Elkington & Co. 17558 Rd 22872 Birmingham 1885
24.4cm / 9⅝in
The design attributed to Chr Dresser.
Illustrated in *Art Deco*, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1971, Cat. no. 149.

142
Silver claret jug with hinged lid and supported on three legs.
Marks: Elkington & Co. 17556 Rd 22871 Birmingham 1885
21.6cm / 8½in
The design attributed to Chr Dresser.

143
Electro-plated cruet frame fitted with a clear glass salt cellar, mustard jar and pepper pot with plated covers
Marks: Elkington & Co. 17286 Elkington plate
12.7cm / 5in
The design attributed to Chr Dresser.



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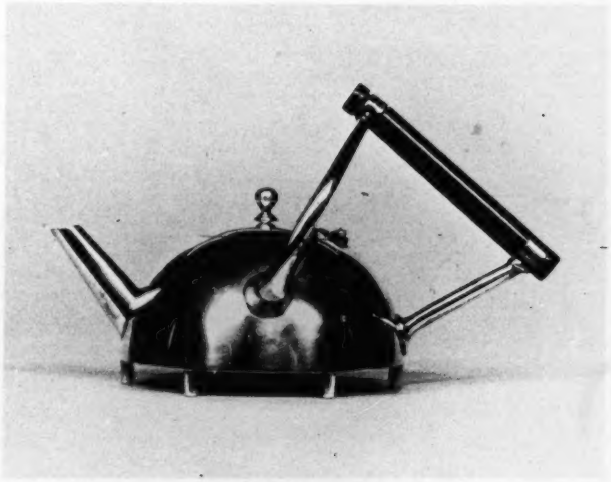

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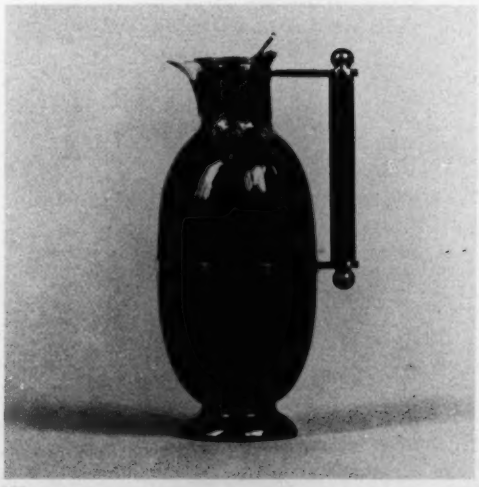


139

Benham & Froud (London)

144
Copper kettle with three brass legs and brass mounts supporting the ebony handle.
Marks: Trade mark of Benham & Froud
24.4cm / 9⅝in
A similar kettle is illustrated by Nikolaus Pevsner in the *Architectural Review*, March, 1937, page 184.

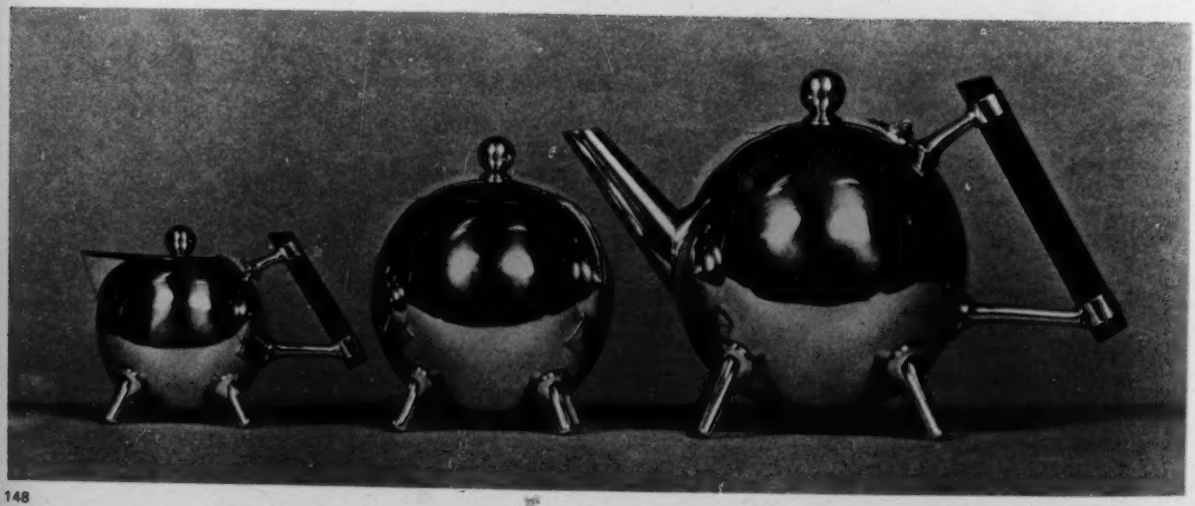
141 142

Other Manufacturers

145
Metal chamberstick, enamelled red and with brass mounts and wooden handle.
Marks: Trade mark for Perry & Co., Wolverhampton, registration mark for 30th October, 1883 stamped DR DRESSERS DESIGN
14.6cm / 5¾in

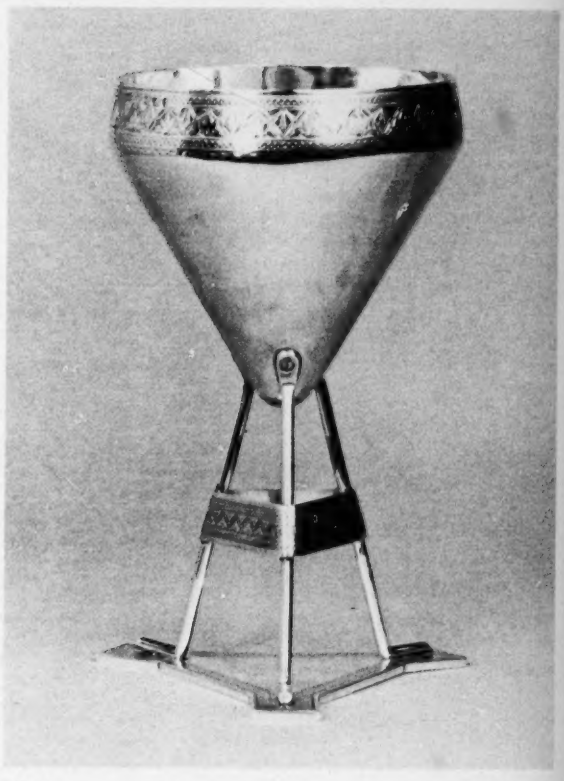
146
Pair of Candlesticks in brass and copper with fretted designs of Japanese inspiration, probably manufactured by Chubb & Co. circa 1880.
27.3cm / 10¾in
Illustrated in *The Studio*, vol. XV, 1899, page 114, where the manufacturer is named as Benham & Froud ; and in *Contemporary Observations on Security from the Chubb Collectanea 1818-1968*, London, 1968 by N. Currer-Briggs. The manufacturer is named as Chubb & Co. As Currer-Briggs' book is based on Messrs Chubbs' extensive archives, it seems most probable that the candlesticks were made by Chubb & Co. and are examples of Dresser's association with them during the days of The Art Furnishers' Alliance.

145



148

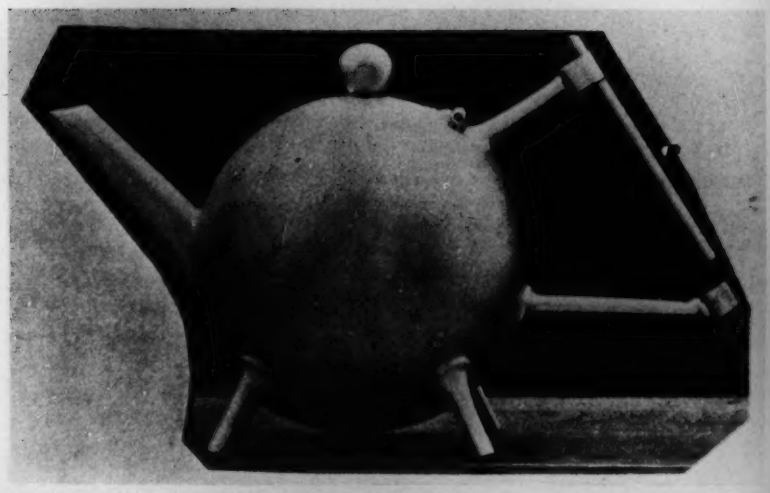
146



147

147
Silver vase supported on three legs, resting on a triangular base. The bowl engraved with a band of stylised foliage, the legs and base with engraved geometric borders.
Marks: B & S Birmingham 1881
21.0cm / 8¼in
Bracher & Sydenham of Reading were retailers.

148
Electro-plated teaset, comprising teapot, cream jug and sugar bowl with lid, each piece with gilt interior and supported on four legs and with ebony handles.
Marks: K & Co. facsimile signature, Chr Dresser 2278 registration mark for 25th November, 1880.
Height of teapot 13.6cm / 5⅜in
A photograph of this design is in James Dixon's Costing book for 1879. K & Co could be the trade mark of the retailer.



Photograph of Dresser's metalwork taken from the 1879 Costing Book of James Dixon & Sons Ltd, and reproduced by kind permission of James Dixon & Sons Ltd.

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Writings on Dresser

1899
Anonymous
The Work of Christopher Dresser.
London, *The Studio*, Vol. XV (pp. 104-114).

1937
Pevsner, Nikolaus
Minor Masters of the XIXth Century.
Christopher Dresser, Industrial Designer.
London, *Architectural Review*, 1937
(pp. 183-186).

1972
Anonymous
Dr Dresser : an enemy of hideousness.
London, *The Financial Times*, January 8, 1972.

A Selection of Books, Catalogues and Articles dealing with the Linthorpe Art Pottery

Blacker, J. F.
Nineteenth century English Ceramic Art.
London, 1911.

Bracegirdle, Cyril
Linthorpe, The forgotten pottery.
Country Life, April 29, 1971.

A Catalogue of a Loan Collection of Linthorpe Art Ware exhibited at the Dorman Memorial Museum, 1906.
Middlesbrough, 1906.

Grabham, Oxley
Yorkshire Potteries, Pots and Potters.
York, 1916.

Le Vine, Jonathan
Linthorpe Pottery, an interim report.
Teesside, 1970.

Moreland, Arthur
Linthorpe: A Forgotten English Pottery.
The Connoisseur, June, 1914.

Wakefield, Hugh
Victorian Pottery.
London, 1962.

Books and Articles dealing with Dresser's Metalwork

Bury, Shirley
The Silver Designs of Dr Christopher Dresser.
Apollo, December, 1962.

Bury, Shirley
Victorian Electroplate.
London, 1971.

Wardle, Patricia
Victorian Silver and Silver Plate.
London, 1963.

Exhibitions

The following two Exhibitions have featured extensive selections of Dresser's work :

Victorian & Edwardian Decorative Arts, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1952.
(Catalogue, London, H.M.S.O., 1952.)

Linthorpe Pottery, Teesside.
(Catalogue, Teesside, 1970.)

Victorian & Edwardian Decorative Art, the Handley-Read Collection, The Royal Academy of Arts, 1972.
(Catalogue, London, The Royal Academy of Arts, 1972.)

Manufacturers for whom Dresser is recorded as having produced Designs

Carpets

Brinton & Lewis
Crossley & Co.

Cast Iron

Coalbrookdale Company

Decorators

Jackson & Graham
The Art Furnishers' Alliance

Fabrics

Liddiard
Steiner & Company
Turnbull & Stockdale
J. W. and C. Ward
Wardles
Warner & Sons
John Wilson

Glass

James Couper & Sons (Glasgow)

Metalwork

Benham & Froud
Chubb & Company
Perry & Company

Pottery

William Ault
Linthorpe Art Pottery
Minton

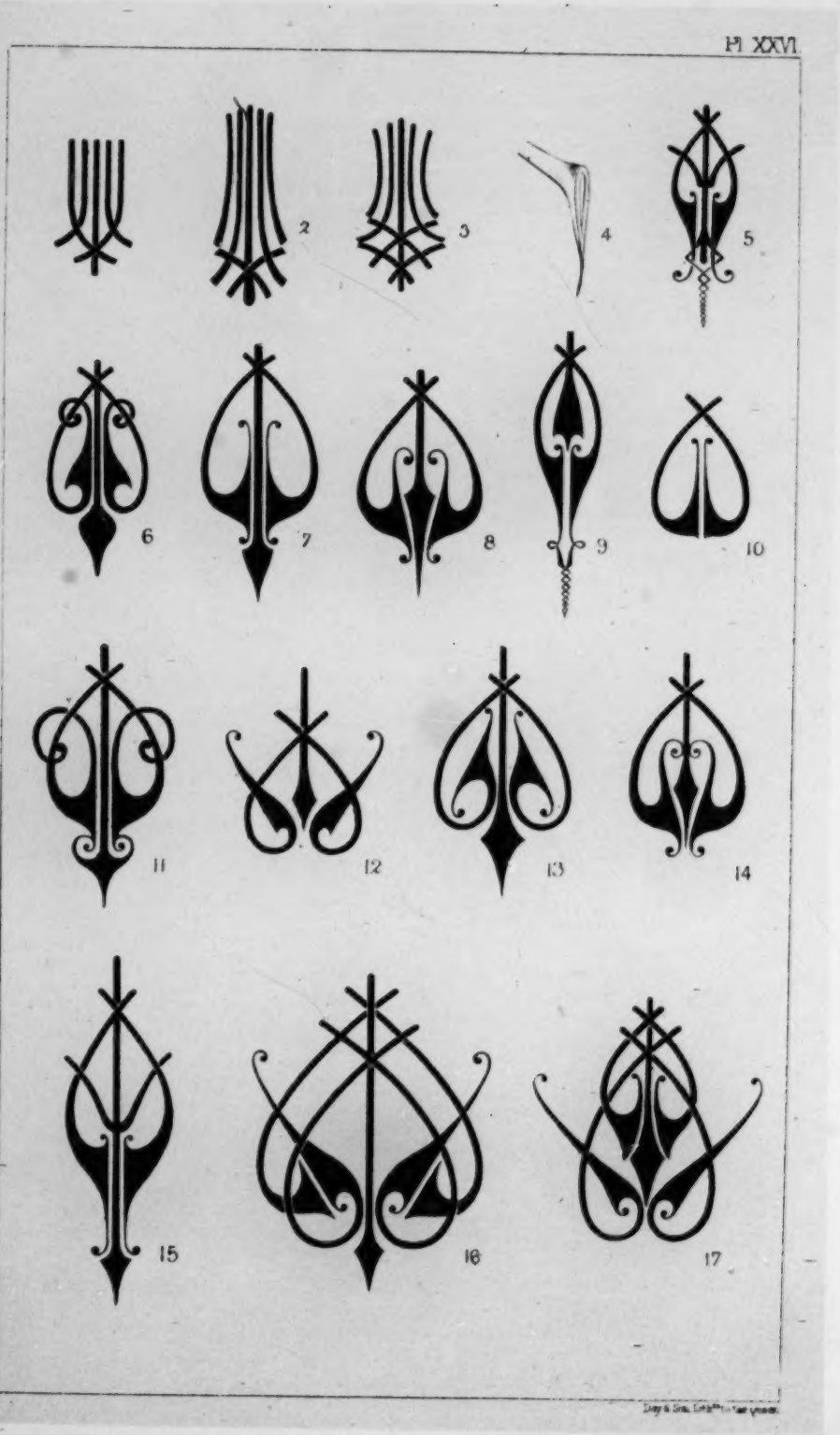
Silver and Plate

James Dixon & Company
Elkington & Company
Hukin and Heath

Wallpapers

The Anaglypta Company
Catto & McClary
Jeffrey & Company
Charles Knowles & Company
Lightbown, Aspinall & Company
Lincrusta, Walton & Cameoid
John Line & Company
Potters of Darwen
Scott, Cuthbertson & Company

(No Continental manufacturers have yet been traced)



The ornamental treatment of the end of the branch.
The Art of Decorative Design, London 1862.

Illustration of a design for painted glass. The left-hand part of a design intended to be used symmetrically.
The Technical Educator, London 1870-73.

Photographs taken and processed by Rodney Wright Watson
arranged by Gordon House.
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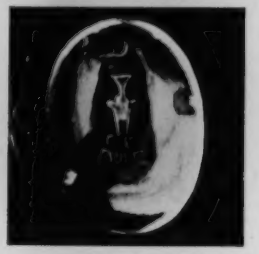
Printed in England by The Hillingdon Press, Uxbridge, Middlesex.

Pottery and Glass Marks

Impressed mark found on Linthorpe pottery designed by Christopher Dresser



William Ault trademark moulded on the base of some pottery designed by Christopher Dresser

Impressed facsimile signature found on some William Ault pottery

Acid etched Clutha glass trademark found on most pieces designed by Christopher Dresser

Illustrated on back cover
Photograph of Dresser's metalwork taken from the 1879 Costing Book of James Dixon & Sons Ltd, and reproduced by kind permission of James Dixon & Sons Ltd.